

# **Including People in Primate Conservation: A Case Study of Shepherds and Barbary Macaques in Bouhachem forest, Northern Morocco**

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## **PhD thesis - Abstract**

Strategies for conserving species threatened with extinction are often guided by the collection and analysis of ecological data. However, in anthropogenic landscapes the inclusion of local people's knowledge and perceptions may be effective in encouraging them to change their behaviour in favour of conservation. I use a conservation project for the Endangered Barbary macaque in Bouhachem forest, northern Morocco, to examine the effectiveness of applying ethnographic data to the development of a conservation strategy. I first present the historical, political and social context of the study site and describe how local people's interactions with outside agencies result in their marginalisation and how this might influence future conservation activities. I describe how, to avoid further exclusion, I engaged local people in project research activities by integrating our different knowledge systems to co-produce information about Barbary macaque locations in Bouhachem. I examine shepherds' ontology of Barbary macaques along with a wild canid, the golden jackal and two domestic species - goats and dogs interpreting these data within the framework of boundary theory. I describe and discuss the reactions of shepherds and their dogs when they are in physical proximity to Barbary macaques and I interpret the social and cultural factors which underlie these often negative cross-species encounters. I demonstrate how inclusion of shepherds in research activities and gaining an understanding of the reasons for their negative behaviour toward the macaques enabled me to foster a change in their attitudes towards a culture of Barbary macaque conservation. To improve the successful outcome of conservation projects and avoid alienating local people, I suggest there is a need for a sensitive method of communication when imparting scientific data which are not concordant with local people's knowledge. I use the example of vaccinating village dogs against rabies both to deliver the message that problem dogs are owned and not feral and to provide a health benefit to villagers. Finally, I appraise the effectiveness of collecting and analysing ethnographic data in relation to conservation and the difficulties I encountered whilst doing so. I discuss the ethical issues surrounding the authorship of publications when co-production of information is the aim of a study. I conclude that the collection and analysis of ethnographic data provide an important dimension to successful conservation practice.